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AUTHOR Norris, Carol A.; Starrfield, Susan
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ABSTRACT

High school students in Phoenix, Arizona, were surveyed to determine their perceptions of participation in school clubs and activities. Clubs/activities were categorized as being (1) athletic; (2) social; or (3) academic. Reasons given for joining certain clubs/activities conformed to expectations: students in athletic clubs joined to perform in athletics, academic club members joined to enhance knowledge, and social club members joined to socialize. Motivation for joining was generally based on internal rewards, particularly in academics. In general, athletics were male-dominated and selected leaders competitively, while social and academic groups were female dominated and selected leaders on a noncompetitive basis. Athletics emphasized group decisions while academic and social groups were oriented toward the individual. Athletic clubs were less democratic in management style than were academic and social clubs. Tasks within the various groups were not perceived as changing significantly from year to year. Social and athletic groups often held club meetings after school, while academic groups met during school hours and in school facilities. Parents of academic group members had higher levels of education than parents of social and athletic group members. The data suggest that social clubs/activities reflect traditional institutional opportunities and that students are socialized through participation in school activities in much the same manner as they are socialized in the scholastic setting. (Author/MJL)

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Participation Levels by Ethnicity in School Activities: Preliminary Indicators*

Carol A. Norris
Phoenix Union High School District

and

Susan Starrfield
Arizona State University

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*Paper presented at AERA symposium "Socialization in the Multiethnic High School." New York City, 1982.

Participation Levels by Ethnicity in School Activities: Preliminary Indicators*

Carol A. Norris, Phoenix Union High School District and
Susan Starrfield, Arizona State University

Background

Two years ago the Phoenix Union High School District, located in metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona, entered into a long-term collaborative research effort with the Center for Adolescent Research, Evaluation, and Service at Arizona State University. The primary objective of the research was to strengthen the impact of the educational learning environment by finding ways of fostering attitudes of understanding and acceptance among different ethnic groups on the then eleven high school campuses.

In the interim, the District, which has been steadily declining in enrollment, has gone from eleven campuses and 24,525 students in 1979-80 to eight campuses and 18,340 projected enrollment for the school year 1982-83. Simultaneously, the Governing Board has identified a campus previously closed to be reopened as a traditional school, and has been served with an injunction to protest the scheduled closing of one of the other campuses. The results of the injunction (both permanent and temporary) will not be known for several months. Ultimately, the District is faced with continued budgetary cuts ranging from $3.2 to $6.5 million annually for at least the next three years. These are in addition to $3.5 million previously cut in the current years budget. It is in this context that the long term objectives of the collaborative research project become particularly significant.

These objectives are:

1) to offer students meaningful activities and opportunities for personal growth,

2) to enhance student self concept,

3) to provide opportunities for improved interaction with others, and,

4) to improve students' interpersonal abilities.

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Purpose

The school clubs/activities portion of the research was intended to

1) describe student participation in school activities

2) explore the self concept of those students, and

3) describe students' attitudes toward others.

These may not seem to be congruent, but they are, particularly when considered in relation to the ultimate objective of the project which is to foster positive attitudes and acceptance among different ethnic groups.

School activities are important to these objectives because:

1) Students elect to become participants in activities which offer opportunities for self growth, and improved inter-relationships,

2) While in-school and classroom activities provide similar opportunities, students may not be as committed to these because their participation in them is voluntary.

Thus, clubs/activities may be more effective for the socialization of students in the long term than are scholastic activities. Vornberg states:

> "Such programs are frequently referred to as extracurricular, even though in practice students may place more emphasis on them than on their course work...Activity programs are just as much a part of the schools' curriculum as the formal courses. The primary difference is that they must attract and hold students' attention voluntarily in order to be effective. When they are successful they have the potential to outperform the traditional curriculum in terms of motivating students and teaching life skills."

The purpose of this paper is to describe the club parameters which influence the socilization of students and present the data collection findings as a verification of the popularly held impressions that clubs/activities represent traditional institutional opportunities for participation by students.

Club/activities exhibit characteristics much like the institutions themselves. That is:

- authority is from the top,

- leadership is by election rather than appointment,

- decision making is by "guided democracy,"
- power is vested in relatively few; however, it is not an elitist system,
- change in norms occur slowly,
- form follows function, and form/function remain relatively the same regardless of who is involved.

Subjects

A total of 122 students from three high schools in the greater Phoenix, Arizona area who participated in clubs or school activities were surveyed. The vast majority of students enrolled on these campuses were not affiliated with clubs or other special activities.

It should be noted that the student population at each of the three schools surveyed were comprised of essentially different ethnic majorities, as shown in Table 1.

When considered as a composite group, the respondents were somewhat representative of the Phoenix Union High School District which is comprised of 62.2% Anglo, 20.0% Hispanic, 12.1% Black, 2.4% Native American and 1.3% Oriental students. The number of respondents of Hispanic background was double that of the District ethnic distribution. Conversely, the number of Anglo respondents was over 60% less than what would be expected in a representative sample of the District. Thus, both Hispanic and Anglo respondents were disproportionate. No Native American or Oriental students participated in the survey.

Procedures

Survey research techniques were used to collect information about student perceptions of their participation in school clubs and activities. Data collection was accomplished by:

1) developing and field testing the survey instruments during the 1979-80 school year, and
2) collecting data in various classroom settings (both required and elective) on three of eleven campuses during February-March, 1981.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

by Activity x Sex x School x Ethnicity

	Black						Hispanic						Anglo						SCHOOL TOTAL
	Male			Female			Male			Female			Male			Female			
	SOC.	AC.	AT.	SOC.	AC.	AT.	SOC.	AC.	AT.	SOC.	AC.	AT.	SOC.	AC.	AT.	SOC.	AC.	AT.	
School 1				1		1		1		5	1	2	4	5	7	2	15	3	47
School 2			1		2			5	7	4	11	2	1	3	1	1	4	1	43
School 3		3	2	2	7	2		4	2	4	5	1							32
Subtotal		3	3	3	9	3		10	9	13	17	5	5	8	8	3	19	4	
Total	6			15			19			35			21			26			122
Percent	17.2%						44.3%						38.5%						100.0%

Key: SOC. = Social
AC. = Academic
AT. = Athletic

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Students provided information about the environmental factors of termporarality/territoriality, membership, positions and roles, tasks and goals, and norms and sanctions. They were asked initially to describe themselves and the activities in which they participated and to relate their perceptions of self and others in this setting.

For purposes of data analysis, school clubs/activities were catalogued as one of three types: athletic, social, and academic. The specific groupings are shown by type or title in Table 2.

TABLE 2

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES WITHIN MAJOR CATEGORIES

Athletic Clubs	Social Groups/Clubs	Academic & Related Clubs
Football	Chicano Student Movement	Student Council/Government
Archery	Black Student Union	Thespians
Basketball	Freshman Class	Home Economics Related Occupations
Baseball	Cars Club	National Honor Society
Varsity Softball	Chess Club	Quill and Scroll
Wrestling	Mat Maids	Voc. Industrial Clubs of America
Tennis	Flag	Speech and Drama Club
Weight Training	Pom Line/Cheerleader	Med Start Club
Gymnastics	Key Club	Future Bus. Leaders of America
Track/Cross Country	Girls Letter Club	Band
Lettermen	Junior Class	Distributive Educ. Clubs of America
Martial Arts	Indian Club	Newspaper Staff
Girls Basketball	Christian Club	Concert Choir
		Jobs for Arizona Graduates
		Drill Team/ROTC
		Gifted Student Seminar
		Spanish Club
		Sun Dial
		Ballet/Folklorico Primavera/Ballet Aztecs
		Upward Bound

Findings

The type of activity (academic, social, athletic) and reason for joining (social, knowledge, service, performance) as shown in Table 3 were contrasted to test between those in academic clubs who joined to enhance knowledge and those in athletic clubs who joined in order to perform.

TABLE 3

TYPE OF ACTIVITY AND REASON FOR JOINING

	Academic	Athletic	Social
Social	7	2	8
Knowledge	32	4	5
Service	14	2	6
Performance	11	23	5

TABLE 4

TYPE OF ACTIVITY AND MOTIVATION TO STAY INVOLVED

	Academic	Athletic	Social
Intrinsic	55	21	20
Extrinsic	8	10	3

As might be expected, students in athletic clubs joined to give an athletic performance; academic club members joined to enhance knowledge and members of social clubs joined to socialize.

Additional contrasts were developed for social, academic, and athletic activities and intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to stay involved, as shown in Table 4. No overall effect was noted. No differences were found between individuals and across all types of activities or clubs. For purposes of classification, intrinsic rewards were inclusive of personal satisfaction; extrinsic rewards were inclusive of such items as trophies, certificates, badges and/or special privileges.

In terms of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, students seemed to affiliate primarily with clubs/activities on the basis of internal rewards. This was particularly true in academics which may be explained by the current "me" oriented expectation for vicarious rewards. The smallest ratios were found in extrinsic motivation and the largest ratios were in intrinsic motivation, particularly in the area of academic activity.

Club Management and Nature of activities

In general, athletics were male dominated and social and academic groups were female dominated. This held true in terms of leadership roles, suggesting typical sex role stereotyping. (See Table 5.) Academic groups had no strong sex domination in leadership roles.

Whereas leaders were selected competitively in athletic groups, they were selected most often on a noncompetitive basis in the other groups. This selection was primarily as a result of volunteerism, seniority and/or skill levels. (See Table 6.)

Decisions related to the type of activity undertaken were a function of the activity leaders and team members in athletic groups. What is typical (tradi-

TABLE 5

Which Sex Dominates Leadership Position

	Female	Male	No Sex Predominates	Total
SOCIAL	12 10.4%	6 5.2%	4 3.5%	22 19.1%
ACADEMIC	17 14.8%	13 11.3%	33 28.7%	63 54.8%
ATHLETIC	4 3.5%	19 16.5%	7 6.1%	30 26.1%
TOTAL	33 28.7%	38 33.0%	44 38.3%	115 100.0%

TABLE 6

How Leaders Are Selected

	Vote by Members	Non-Competitive	Skill (Competitive)	Total
SOCIAL	17 14.4%	6 5.1%	0 0.0%	23 19.5%
ACADEMIC	48 40.7%	11 9.3%	5 4.2%	64 54.2%
ATHLETIC	4 3.4%	14 11.9%	13 11.0%	31 26.3%
TOTAL	69 58.5%	31 26.3%	18 15.2%	118 100.0%

tional) of athletic activity is that the group is of the essence, whereas in academic and social groups the individual is of the essence. (See Table 7.)

The athletic clubs/activities were found to be less democratic in their management style than were academic and social clubs. No ethnic differences among club/activity leaders were noted.

Tasks within the various groups were not perceived as changing significantly from year to year. (See Table 8.) In addition; club meetings were most often held after school for social and athletic groups. Conversely, they were held during school and in school facilities for academic groups.

One demographic description of note was that parents of academic club members had some college experience or were college graduates at a ratio of 2/1.

Students who belong to academic groups had parents who had attained higher levels of education than did students involved in social or athletic groups.

Summary and Implications

In summary, the students' descriptions of the clubs appear to parallel the nature of institutionalized public education. Therefore, it is important to note that the data does provide an objective verification of institutional "expectation." It appears to verify the popularly held notion that school clubs/activities are representative of traditional institutional opportunities. This suggests that students who participate in school activities are socialized through these activities in much the same manner as they are in the scholastic setting. More importantly, it verifies that territorality, position and roles, membership, tasks and goals, and norms and sanctions within clubs/activities can be described objectively.

The information contained in these descriptions will be utilized in the future in several ways:

TABLE 7

Who Decides What Members Will Do

	Members Together	Activity Leaders	Activity Sponsor	Total
SOCIAL	15 13.9%	3 2.8%	0 0.0%	18 16.7%
ACADEMIC	38 35.2%	17 15.7%	5 4.6%	60 55.5%
ATHLETIC	11 10.2%	14 13.0%	5 4.6%	30 27.8%
TOTAL	64 59.3%	34 31.5%	10 9.2%	108 100.0%

TABLE 8

Yearly Task the Same/Different

	Remain the Same	Change With New		Total
SOCIAL	4 3.4%	19 16.0%		23 19.4%
ACADEMIC	21 17.6%	43 36.1%		64 53.7%
ATHLETIC	15 12.6%	17 14.3%		32 26.9%
TOTAL	40 33.6%	79 66.4%		119 100.0%

1) to develop written generic descriptions of the three types of clubs/activities in which students participate.
2) to describe their motivation for participating in clubs/activities, and
3) to identify students' attitudes toward others in the club/activity setting.
4) to continue situations in which interpersonal relationships can be maximized.

As the descriptions are developed, they will be further matched with other portions of the longitudinal research data base to provide planning models for students to use in selecting those clubs/activities from which they can most benefit. Benefit in this context is used to mean expanding both personal and interpersonal skills through club/activity involvement.

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